Indianapolis Charter Schools

First Year Review
Overview

Charter schools in their 1st year of operation will participate in a "critical friends" process of evaluation, which aims to ensure that the school begins the ongoing process of unit assessment, building an infrastructure for continuous improvement as an organization. In the first year, the school will work towards:

- Understanding the Performance Framework (standards & rubrics)
- Developing school-specific indicators for performance
- Building relationships with the site review team and review process
- Mapping systems and data to be used as evidence within the framework (See Appendix A for sample data sources)
- Complying with regulations regarding special education files

The Performance Framework can be found at:
http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Schools/Operating/accountability_handbook.htm

In addition to informal meetings regarding the evaluative process, there will be several more official visits from the site review team, including:

- Fall site team observation
- Fall site team visit
- Spring observation
- Spring site team visit

For more information on the site review process:
http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Schools/Operating/site_visit.htm

The basic goal of the first year evaluation is to monitor the efforts and the outcomes of the school in meeting the standards documented in the Performance Framework. The efforts of the review team will focus on the following key guiding questions from the framework:

- *Is the educational program a success?*
- *Is the organization effective and well-run?*
- *Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?*
- *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

Throughout the year, CEEP will work with the school staff to provide mentoring and guidance to be sure that the evaluative process is on track and that staff know what is expected. We want to work in partnership with school staff, as a critical friend who can help understand the school's performance.

The Performance Framework

Under the Performance Framework, a school's success will be measured by its performance relative to common indicators of performance established by the Mayor's Office for all schools it charters and school-specific indicators developed by each school that reflect its mission and unique goals. Each school's accountability plan is, therefore, based on both common and school-specific indicators.

Common Indicators of Performance

Though each charter school will develop its own indicators of performance, all schools' success will also be measured by a set of common indicators. These common indicators, many of them required by Indiana state law, will ensure that the public and the Mayor's Office have some level of common information about all schools chartered by the Mayor. Refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed description of the common indicators, standards of performance, the sources of data that will be used to measure schools' success on these indicators, and the rating system.

Of particular note, each school must conduct standardized tests of reading and mathematics for students annually. To meet state requirements, schools are required to administer ISTEP+ every fall to students in grades 3-10 (as these tests become available in all grades). The Mayor's Office has an additional requirement that students be tested annually in the fall and spring in order to collect comparable, longitudinal data to measure student growth over the course of the school year. This consistent year-to-year testing will allow the Mayor's Office to assess the "value-added" by each school – the degree to which the school contributes to the learning of its students. This kind of analysis will in turn prove critical in the Mayor's Office's assessment of school progress.

School-Specific Indicators of Performance

Since each school is unique, it has school-specific goals that are not reflected in the common indicators. The Performance Framework provided above recognizes this fact by including indicators 1.4 and 2.6 as placeholders for school-specific indicators. In addition, indicator 2.2 is "common" in the sense that it applies to all schools, but the specific expected levels of attendance and retention of students will vary by school. Each school will negotiate a set of such indicators with the Mayor's Office over the course of the first year or two of operation. Section IV of this handbook describes the process for developing the school-specific indicators and Appendix 2 provides templates schools must complete and submit to the Mayor's Office detailing their goals and measures.

http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Schools/Operating/accountability_handbook.htm

During both visits, and throughout the year, CEEP will work with the schools to provide feedback on the school-specific goals and assessments that have been developed, as well as interpreting results/data related to the indicators common to all schools.

Accountability Activities

During the first year, two documents will be produced for each charter school:

1. Fall site visit report (formative)
2. Spring site visit report (summative)

During the fall and spring site visits the teams will collect evidence regarding the school's performance through a number of different mechanisms:

- Classroom observations
- Staff focus group conversation
- Leadership/administration focus group conversation
- Parent focus group conversation
- Data/documentation the school provides
    - Evidence related to "common indicators of performance" (see below)
    - School-specific performance goals, assessments, and associated evidence (as available)

The site team will collect and analyze evidence during the visits, and discuss strengths and "areas for attention" related to each guiding question with school leadership. The final report to the Mayor's Office will include both strengths and suggestions. The school will have a chance to review each report and provide input on it prior to its final submission to the Mayor's Office. Please see the site visit protocol to review the specific interview questions to be asked during focus group interviews.

Accountability Planning

YEAR 1	Put the Pieces in Place – Gather Baseline Data
Summer **Pre-Opening**	Schools clarify the process by which they will gather baseline data on all performance indicators (including those school-specific indicators that are known) and submit this plan to the Mayor's Office.

Fall	Schools gather baseline data on each indicator, if possible. At a minimum, baseline data should be collected for:
	
	• Non-ISTEP+ standardized testing (i.e., required annual fall and spring testing for value-added analysis)
	• Student level identifiers for tracking student performance. This identifier should be the Student Test Number assigned to each student as required by the Indiana Department of Education. Demographic information should be attached to the student identifier so that student data can be disaggregated at a minimum by:
	    ○ economically disadvantaged students;
	    ○ students with disabilities;
	    ○ students with limited English proficiency;
	    ○ major racial and ethnic groups; and
	    ○ gender

Winter	Schools submit baseline data to the Mayor's Office.

Ongoing	**Throughout** the first year of operation, each school works with the Mayor's Office to: • Refine any school-specific indicators of success included in its charter application, developing clear goals and measures for each. • Identify and develop additional school-specific goals and measures of success.
Summer **(by June 1)**	Schools submit data showing progress to date on all performance indicators in their accountability plans at that time.

Preparing for the Site Visit

School Tasks:

1. Identify a contact person to facilitate the site visit questions or issues
2. Set up a work space for the team
3. Provide the following information:
   a. Copy of school's master schedule
   b. Organizational chart and/or list of staff (names, grades, subjects, e-mail address) and map of the school with teachers, grades and classroom location identified (or numbering system and location and grade of teachers)
   c. Copies of written policies and handbooks for teachers, parents, and/or students (have available during the site visit)
4. Have each student bring one sample of work to the student focus groups
5. Set-up a space and identify participants for focus groups (chairs for 6-8 participants per group, flip chart, paper, pens)

Appendix A: Sample Data Sources

Standard	Indicator	Sample Evidence Sources
Is the educational program a success?	1.1 Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?	• Indiana Department of Education and ISTEP+ Desegregation Summary Report, • PL221 Report, • ISTEP+ Cohort Tracking spreadsheet for Reading and Math • 2006 AYP Summary Report found on IDOE website • 2007 AYP Summary Report found on IDOE website
	1.2 Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?	• NWEA data reported in the Mayor's Accountability Report • Sufficient Gains Graph • Mayor's Accountability Report 2005 - 2006 – Value Added Analysis • Mayor's Accountability Report 2006 – 2007 – Value Added Analysis • NWEA RIT scores (growth targets & growth index)
	1.3 Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?	• ISTEP+ scores across all grade levels • Class wide Comparative Analysis –Charter School, Indianapolis Public Schools, IDOE website, and the State of Indiana
	1.4 Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?	• Relevant to individual school goals, system of tracking that goals are being met
Is the organization effective and well-run?	2.1 Is the school in sound fiscal health?	• Results of Indiana State Board of Accounts audit of school finances, • Results of external audit of school finances commissioned by school in accordance with Charter Agreement with the Mayor, • Mayor's Office records of timeliness of report submission • Charter School Balance Sheet • Charter School Temporary School Loan Account • Charter School Income Statement • Current Budget • Projected Budgets
	2.2 Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	• IDOE official counts, • IDOE reports, • Budget amendments, • Internal spreadsheets
	2.3 Is the school's board active and	• Board Meeting minutes

	competent in its oversight?	• Board Roster
	2.4 Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	• Parent Survey, • Mayor's Accountability Report
	2.5 Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	• School-wide Survey • Administrative Job Descriptions • Human Resource files • Employee Handbook (4.5) • Team Member Survey Results, • Cambridge Education Report
Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?	3.1 Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational and governance obligations?	• Examples of documents in the Compliance and Governance Handbook include: the Quarterly Compliance Certification Letter, the Annual Report to the IDOE Charter Schools Office, Quarterly Financial Statements, Board Meeting Minutes, and the Teacher Profile Packet. • Other sources of evidence include public board meeting announcement flyers and student recruitment materials • Compliance binder • Meeting minutes • Email communication with compliance staff • Expert site visit reports
	3.2 Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?	• Accountability Report on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools, • Cambridge Education Site Visit Report, • Site Visit Report, • Parent Surveys, • Facilities Inspection Reports, • Discipline Logs • Fire Marshall Report • Staff and parent surveys • Copy of Sign in/out Log • Copy of Visitor Log • Pictures of improvements
	3.3 Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?	• Compliance and Governance Binder Tab 15, • Student recruitment literature and schedule of events, application, enrollment packet, lottery announcement and waitlist • Enrollment Graph • Charter Document • School's documented enrollment policy (copy of lottery procedure, enrollment forms, prior years' recruitment strategies) • Marketing materials (calendar, brochures,

		website links, student/family handbook) • Mayor's Office records of parent complaints • Mayor's Office compliance and governance reviews • Exit interview form and log • Parent complaint log
	3.4 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?	• Case conference schedules, • Signed ICAN generated IEP's, • Parent communication logs, • Evaluation/re-evaluation schedules and reports, • Student files • Expert site visit teams' reviews of special education compliance • Expert site visit reports • Email correspondence regarding signatures of attendees at case conferences
	3.5 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?	• Teacher certification, • Curriculum resources, • Student recruitment materials in Spanish, • Multi-lingual teachers • Indiana Department of Education ESL Standards • Expert site visit reports
Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?	4.1 Does the school have a high quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	• Saxon Publishers Curriculum Alignment Documents, • Open Court Reading Grades k-6 Curriculum, • Alignment Documents, • FOSS k-8 Curriculum Alignment Documents, • Saxon Math k-12 Research Base, • Open Court Reading Research Base, • Cambridge Education Evaluation, • Lighthouse Academies Education Model Evaluation, • Team Member Survey Results, • Lighthouse Academies Pacing Guide (Second Grade) • A+ Curriculum Guide • NWEA DesCartes sample • School-wide Survey • Teacher Survey
	4.2 Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	• Student work samples, • Cambridge Education Evaluation, • Classroom Observations, Observation guidelines/ rubric, • Sample of Musician of the week • Teacher Quick Visit Form

		• Teacher Observation Form • School-wide Survey • Mission Statement • Monthly Meetings with Administration • Weekly Staff Meetings • School Charter
	4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?	• School-wide survey • College Inventory Form in Each Advisory Portfolio • Students Attending Ivy Tech • College Table & Bulletin Board in hallways (3.2) • Field Trips to Various Colleges
	4.4 Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	• Sample Kindergarten, First grade, Second grade, Third grade, Fourth grade, and Fifth grade scores, • Sample NWEA report, • Sample of lesson plans, • Scheduled meetings/GLM Notes, • Workshop plans • A+ Weekly Reports • A+ Advisory Tracking Reports • NWEA Scores & ISTEP+ Results • DesCartes Goal Strands • Lesson Plans
	4.5 Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	• Teacher and others Interview Protocol, • Teacher Recruitment schedule and interview essay, • Teacher list with experience, date of hire and licensure area, • Professional development opportunities – examples of agendas, • Independent Study Assignment for IPDP, • Teacher Evaluation Procedures • Employee Handbook • Staff Environmental Survey • Highly Qualified Teacher Survey • Teacher Application
	Standard 4.6: Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	• Weekly 'Beacon' Newsletters, • Accountability Report on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools, • INSAI Interview data from parents and students, • Classroom Observation Data, • Cambridge Education Report • Mission Statement Posted in classrooms, handbook, website

		• School-wide Survey • School Recruitment Brochure • Interview process: mission posted and addressed
	Standard 4.7: Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	• Informal observation notes, walk-through observation notes, Formal observation notes • ILCS Family Survey Results, • Parent Survey, • Discipline ladder, • Evidence of yellow/green slip program; • Number of referrals this year • School Environment and Staff Survey 2007 • 2007 Family Survey • Student Handbook • Phone Logs • Class Newsletters • Comments on Weekly Class Reports (elementary)
	Standard 4.8: Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	• Report Card comments from teachers, • Emails to/from parents, • Progress Reports, • Parent Involvement Surveys, • Proof of Home Visits, • Newsletters (individual classroom/school-wide), • Communication logs, • School Handbook, • Enrollment papers/flyers in Spanish, • Family engagement calendar • School Environment and Staff Survey 2007 • Calendar (3.3) • A+ Weekly Reports (4.4) • School Website

*Please note that the "Sample Evidence Sources" are NOT meant to define the actual sources of evidence for third year schools. They are simply meant to help schools understand the type of data that is needed so that they can identify sources of data that are relevant to the individual school.

**Sample Evidence Sources were synthesized from reports by elementary and secondary charter schools.